

# Ben Barka Case Sprouts Some New Sensations

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PARIS, Jan. 24 — New disclosures emerged today from the shadows of the Ben Barka affair — a scandal now likened to the celebrated Dreyfus case, which rocked France at the turn of the century.

The kidnaping and presumed murder of Mehdi Ben Barka, the Moroccan opposition leader, is now said to involve French police conspiring behind the backs of their own government; a Gaullist deputy plotting to cover up the scandal; a furious President de Gaulle venting his displeasure—possibly against high members of his Cabinet—over being misinformed and disobeyed; and a beleaguered King Hassan II of Morocco desperately struggling to survive at home and escape embarrassment abroad.

One of the day's two sensations, the implications for the Cabinet, was provided by the weekly L'Express, which devoted 18 pages to the case. The other sensation was the unveiling of enigmatic developments in Morocco, whose King was depicted as the virtual prisoner of Interior Minister Mohammed Oufkir.

Oufkir, who controls the police and army, has been of it now—he wants to have described by one witness, me rubbed out." There emerged from the as the mastermind of the abduction of Ben Barka in Paris Oct. 29, and as Ben Barka's slayer. France has issued, and Morocco has rejected, a warrant for the arrest of Oufkir, and as a result France yesterday recalled its Ambassador in Rabat.

Today, Morocco recalled its Ambassador from Paris.

It was L'Express which raised the spectre of Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, whose imprisonment for treason in 1894 on the basis of forged documents revealed the shocking servility of the civil power to the army general staff. The Ben Barka affair, L'Express said today, would expose a similar "weakness of the Fifth Republic for its police networks."

Ben Barka's disappearance seems to have been working was probably linked to his involvement in politics in Morocco, where he had strong leftist support, or because of his activities in subversive "third world" movements—or possibly both.

L'Express today pictured a Gaullist, deputy, Pierre Lemarchand, as the protector of the police who kidnaped Ben Barka.

## Denies Knowledge

Lemarchand, who himself is understood to have played a police role during the European uprising in Algeria, denied two days ago that he knew anything of the affair and said he had not even seen Figon—an apparent ringleader of the plot—since last September.

But L'Express quoted Figon as telling journalist Jean Marvier a few hours before he was shot dead last Monday that Lemarchand had promised him a passport and \$1000 so he could get out of the country.

"But that heap of garbage, Lemarchand, has been holding me up for two months," L'Express quoted Figon as saying.

"And why? Because—I'm sure he has been of it now—he wants to have described by one witness, me rubbed out."

There emerged from the pages of L'Express today a picture of secret police in France and Morocco cooperating on reciprocal basis, a kind of professional and customary cooperation based on a variety of motives and carried on without the knowledge of higher governmental authorities, at least in France.

## Request For Help

Moroccan secret police said to have asked French secret police to help them get their hands on Ben Barka. Rabat is the turntable for the secret police of many nationalities, accustomed to helping each other out on a reciprocal basis. They also had interlocking memberships. Antonio Lopez, the first of the French secret agents to be arrested, seemed to have been working both for the French and Moroccan secret services.

Contacts between the secret police agents involved in the Ben Barka affair had been made during common action

another participant in the kidnaping, Secret Police Chief Maj. Ahmed Dlimi. But apparently relations have not been broken off. In fact, public hostility is strangely paralleled by apparent undercover efforts from both sides to patch things up.

## Price On His Head

There was also the bait of money—\$140,000, according to L'Express, was the price set on Ben Barka's head. Some of the secret agents apparently wanted a part of this "reward."

Government officials became involved only when they learned of the affair and tried to cover up for the police, fearing the political consequences of an open scandal. Some of them are now reported in danger of punishment.

Threatened are Interior Minister Roger Frey and perhaps even Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, since the counterespionage service was attached directly to his department.

A symptom of deGaulle's displeasure with both is that he confided the reform of the police to someone else than Frey, whose role it would normally have been, and removed the counterespionage service from Pompidou to turn it over to the army.

De Gaulle seems to have been kept in the dark for a long while, and when he did learn the truth, gave orders that the investigation be pushed relentlessly. These orders were resisted or ignored.

According to L'Express, it was Michel Debre, now Minister of Finance, who finally informed him of the involvement of French police.

De Gaulle blew up at a Cabinet meeting, exclaiming, "There are some clowns here who take me for a plaything. Their accounts are going to be settled."

But the police continued to withhold what they knew from the judiciary, and not until the press, led by L'Express, began to expose the facts, was de Gaulle able to enforce his orders, at least partially.

The Judiciary has still not complied with his demand that the public be kept informed. For instance, nothing was revealed today about the two-hour questioning of Lemarchand by Judge Louis Zollinger.

Meanwhile, Morocco's refusal to admit the guilt of Oufkir has been underlined by the public appearance of King Hassan II in the left holds a mass meeting

naping, Secret Police Chief Maj. Ahmed Dlimi. But apparently relations have not been broken off. In fact, public hostility is strangely paralleled by apparent undercover efforts from both sides to patch things up.

Moroccan Ambassador Moulay Hassan conferred with French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville this morning before his recall was announced. Meanwhile Reda Guedira, former Moroccan Foreign Minister, a close personal friend of the King, is in Paris reputedly trying to end the dispute.

It is believed here that the King is virtually the prisoner of Oufkir, who controls the army and the police, and dares not disavow him publicly, but is trying privately to extricate himself from this situation.

"His government is isolated," L'Express said today. "He has had to suspend Parliament and the Constitution."

The weekly's Moroccan correspondents report that the King's younger brother, Prince Moulay Abdallah, has been charging that Oufkir "was preparing for this year an attack on the King, set up in such a way that it could be attributed to the followers of Ben Barka. Once the King had been killed, General Oufkir would take over the power."

They also quote his personal physician, Dr. Hadi Mes-souak, who is one of the officers of the Moroccan Communist Party, as saying:

"As things stand now, the only thing left is to see which one will liquidate the other first."

## Police Called Idiots

Oufkir is quoted as calling the French police "idiots. They've gotten us into difficulties. If I had handled this with the American services, there wouldn't have been any leaks."

Whether to create a diversion or for other reasons, "American services" are apparently going to be dragged into this affair.

The weekly, *Candide*, has hinted at CIA complicity, and *Match* will devote a page on Tuesday implying CIA involvement — the supposed motive being that Ben Barka was a leading promoter of the recent Three-Continents Congress in Havana.

The opposition will start making political capital out of the scandal, with an eye on the public appearance of King Hassan II in the left holds a mass meeting of protest Tuesday night.

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